

IV.—KANT'S TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION OF THE CATEGORIES.¹

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THE importance of Kant's transcendental deduction is patent if it establishes what it claims to do. It appeared at a moment when philosophy was in the sorest need of some such proof to deliver it from scepticism, for both the German rationalists and the English empiricists had failed, not only to supply rational justification of such fundamental beliefs as the existence of a world external to the individual consciousness or the principle that every change must be caused, but even to explain the very possibility of acquiring fresh knowledge (as opposed to particular, unconnected experiences), so that philosophy seemed reduced to either formulating analytic judgments which everybody knew already, or inventing synthetic judgments which it could neither prove nor even suggest a method of proving. Now Kant claims to have at one stroke justified the fundamental presuppositions of science and ordinary life and discovered a totally new method of procedure in philosophy, a method by which it is possible to prove a system of really synthetic *a priori* principles, and to establish a complete philosophy of all that concerns human experience directly. In this philosophy the foundation on which all else depends is the transcendental deduction of the categories. It is therefore of the greatest importance to see what the results of this deduction are, and how far we can at the present day accept them.

The task which Kant set himself here is that of deducing the existence of an objective world involving necessary laws from the indisputable data of immediate consciousness. What we are immediately aware of is a manifold of perceptions passing away and succeeding each other in time, or, to put it more simply, we are immediately aware of change. Now although the dictum of Descartes, "I think, therefore I am," cannot be held to prove the existence of a self in its usual sense, *i.e.*, a permanent subject of our changing percep-

¹ The references are to the original pages of the *Critique* (A = first, B = second, edition).

tions, it does prove the impossibility of doubting the occurrence of immediate experience; a man cannot doubt that there is experience, because the doubt is itself an experience. Nor can it be doubted that we immediately experience change; at least no sceptic has been found to doubt it. So Kant started from a point of view admitted by all critics, namely, the consciousness of a manifold of successive representations. Now we shall practically confine our discussion to the views expressed as to the relation of the self (transcendental unity of apperception) and objects, and to the proof of the transcendental unity of apperception itself. We shall take the versions of both editions together as supplementing and completing each other, and try to follow the logical order and implications rather than the actual order of Kant's statement.

To begin our summary of the argument, it is admitted that we are conscious of a changing manifold of representations. But we cannot be conscious of a manifold as a manifold, unless we can combine its diverse elements in thought. To be conscious of ABC it is not enough to be conscious of A, B, and C separately, we must be conscious of them as together. Now what we are conscious of is always a process in time. Therefore we must be conscious of the various stages of the process together, while distinguishing the times at which they severally occur (the synthesis of apprehension in perception). But, if we had forgotten the first part of the process when we experienced the last part, this would be impossible, therefore we must be conscious that the first part has already occurred when we experience the last part (the synthesis of reproduction in imagination). Further we must be aware of the first and the last part as belonging to a single process, or, in other words, as connected elements in a single object of thought; otherwise we should not be conscious of them as a whole at all, so that we could not describe them as constituting together even only a changing manifold (the synthesis of recognition in concepts).

Consciousness of the manifold is thus described as presupposing a threefold synthesis, but the important point about the doctrine of the synthesis is not its actual occurrence as a psychical event, but the discovery that consciousness of its results is implied in consciousness of change. Being unconscious itself, the synthesis can only be described in terms of its results for consciousness; it is only as the unification of the manifold for consciousness that the synthesis has any meaning at all. The argument for the occurrence of a synthesis is nothing but an argument to show that apprehension of the manifold involves apprehension of it as constituting an object

for thought, so that consciousness of change implies consciousness of objects. Further, consciousness of any particular object must involve consciousness of the particular unifying principle by which the diverse elements which constitute it are combined in a single whole. But to be conscious of any complex as constituting a single object of thought we must be conscious of its different aspects as united by a single act of thought, since for Kant all relation is an act of the mind. Now it is just this unity that we mean when we speak of consciousness of an identical self. We do not mean, in speaking of the self as identical, either that the empirical self as an object of introspection is unchanging, or that the different stages and elements in the experience of the self are connected by a mere *de facto* resemblance; we mean that different elements in experience are capable of being united in a single act of thought, and that in so far as we are aware of this union we are self-conscious. Consciousness of change is therefore found to involve both consciousness of objects and consciousness of self.

Now the doctrine of the threefold synthesis constitutes the main part of what Kant in his preface to the first edition calls the subjective deduction. There¹ he describes it as psychological, and consequently disparages its importance. He regards it as a hypothetical proof of the actual occurrence of certain syntheses necessary causally to account for self-conscious experience; the "objective" deduction, on the other hand, being an analysis of what is logically implied in the concept of experience. "The one" (*i.e.*, the objective deduction) "refers to the objects of pure understanding and is meant to establish and make intelligible the objective validity of its *a priori* concepts; just for this reason is it indeed essential to my purpose. The other" (*i.e.*, the subjective deduction) "is meant to deal with the pure understanding itself as regards its possibility and the cognitive faculties on which it is based, and so treat it from the subjective side. Now, although this exposition is of great importance for my main purpose, yet it is not an essential part of it. For the main question always is—What and how much can understanding and reason come to know without the help of any experience, and not—How is the faculty of thought itself possible?" This statement justifies the view that the deduction does not depend on the actual occurrence of the synthesis as a psychical process prior to consciousness and, as a general warning against laying too much stress on the somewhat faulty psychology of the *Critique*, should be always borne in mind; but it is impossible rigidly to

¹ A X., XI.

divide the deduction into two parts, the one psychological and unessential, the other epistemological and essential, for important metaphysical truths are sometimes expressed in psychological form. Kant's remark about the subjective deduction does not do justice to his own argument. For it is not by empirical introspection but by analysis of what must be involved in any possible experience that he arrives at the threefold synthesis, and the proof of its occurrence is essentially a proof that consciousness of the manifold as connected or as having a synthetic unity is implicit in consciousness of change. Further, it is the clearest statement of this doctrine in the whole deduction, and although in other passages the synthesis is formally different—it is generally treated as a single synthesis carried out by the imagination—this does not alter the validity of the proof that cognition of anything always involves consciousness of it as a connected object of thought. Without such consciousness judgment would be impossible, for to judge about anything we must recognise it as so-and-so, we must know it as it is or at least ascribe some definite character to it, whether rightly or wrongly. But since the object of judgment is never anything absolutely simple and unrelated, internally and externally, the consciousness that accompanies judgment always involves the holding together by the mind of a diversity in unity; it is always consciousness of something as having different but related aspects; it is never consciousness of a mere representation, but always of a representation as referred to a system wider than itself and relatively independent of the act of cognition, whether that system be the empirical self or belong to the physical world; in other words it is consciousness of an object. Without such consciousness we might still feel, like animals, but we could not know our feelings as feelings, and consequently we could not judge either about them or about anything else. A philosophy that denied this consciousness would be forced to be a dumb philosophy, and so would be a contradiction in terms.

Now for Kant the presupposition of all consciousness is self-identity (the transcendental unity of apperception). On this he lays great stress, and it is treated almost as an axiom by him. The proof of it given in the second edition deduction is little more than a statement of the doctrine to be proved. ¹ "The manifold representations, which are given in a perception (*Anschauung*), would not all be *my* representations, if they did not all belong to a single self-consciousness, *i.e.*, as my representations (even though I am not conscious of them as such); yet they must necessarily conform to that

condition under which alone it is *possible* for them to 'stand together in one universal self-consciousness, for otherwise they would not all belong to me.' Now this way of putting the argument is quite inconclusive, for the sceptic might say that I could not legitimately speak of "my representations" but only of "representations," or, more likely, might, like Hume, contend that "my" only implied a certain likeness in quality, or a peculiar kind of relation not involving anything of the nature of a permanent self. A similarly unsatisfactory statement of the argument is given in the first edition.¹

But the real proof of self-identity, as the necessary presupposition of all knowledge, is clearly implied in the two-fold doctrine that we can know nothing, even our perceptions, except as an object held in unity by the relating activity of the mind, and that self-identity is for us only expressed in this unity, might in fact almost be described as but another aspect of this unity.¹ "For the empirical consciousness, which accompanies the various representations, is in itself dispersed and has no reference to the identity of the subject. This reference does not consist in the fact that I accompany every representation with consciousness, but in the fact that I *add* one representation to the others and am conscious of their synthesis. So it is only because I am able to combine a manifold of given representations *in a single consciousness* that it is possible for me to represent to myself *the identity of my consciousness in these representations*." In other words, Kant held that the only path to knowledge of our self-identity was through knowledge of the connexion of diverse elements in all objects of our thought, but if it is the only path it is obviously *a* path to knowledge of self-identity. Our identity as conscious selves is for Kant no unproved assumption, but is deduced from the possibility of being conscious of anything related as such (and all cognition is of the related), since he must have been aware of this implication of his argument. For us to be conscious of an object as constituted by a relation of diverse elements we must clearly be conscious of these elements as together, and this means that they must be united in a single consciousness, which is just what is meant by the transcendental unity of apperception. That Kant did not make this deduction of self-identity more explicit is certainly strange, but he is less concerned with this aspect of the deduction than with the limitations of our knowledge of self and the deduction of an objective world involving necessary laws. At any rate he does not include the proof of the transcendental unity of apperception as one of

¹ A 116, 122.

the objects of his work in the statement of the latter in the introductory part of the *Critique*. However, in a footnote¹ to the second edition deduction, he says that the proof of the doctrine that the manifold in perception is represented as belonging to the necessary unity of self-consciousness through a synthesis by the categories rests "on the represented *unity of perception*, by which an object is given. This unity always involves a synthesis of the manifold given in a perception, and so already includes the reference of this last to the unity of apperception." Also in a first edition passage he seems to deduce unity of apperception from consciousness of relation.² "Now there can take place in our mind no cognitions (*Erkenntnisse*), there can be no relation and unity between cognitions, without that unity of consciousness, which precedes all data of perception, and in relation to which all representation of objects is alone possible"; but too much stress must not be laid on this last passage, because it was probably composed at a very early date. The transcendental unity of apperception is regarded as the general form of unity common to all possible objects of experience and itself the source of all the special forms of unity. It seems that self-identity, in the sense above explained, must involve some degree of empirical consciousness of our identity, for, as the transcendental unity of apperception is only realised in the particular forms of relation involved in the consciousness of empirical objects, the consciousness of these objects can hardly be separated from the consciousness of self as identical. However, we should note Kant's remark.³ "This representation" (*i.e.*, the representation of "I think, or of self-identity") "may be clear (empirical consciousness) or obscure. We are not concerned with that here, nor even with its existence, but the possibility of the logical form of all knowledge depends necessarily on its relation to this apperception *as a faculty*."

But, if the fact that we are conscious of objects proves self-identity, conversely, this self-identity can only be known as the presupposition of consciousness of objects, and has for us no meaning apart from the synthesis by which we unify the manifold so as to constitute consciousness of objects. It is only in relation to this synthesis that the self can be regarded as identical. It might be thought that this was nothing but an appeal to ignorance, but that is not the case; for the unchanging identity of the self is no possible *object* of experience, and, therefore, in relation to possible experience at any rate (whether any knowledge be attainable by us outside that sphere or not), it can only be known as the subject

¹ B 133; B 143.² A 107.³ A 117 (footnote).

which is the presupposition of all experience ; for, to be known at all in relation to experience, it must be either a particular object in the empirical content of our minds or a presupposition of all experience. Further, it is just as true that, to be aware that I in perceiving A am the same self who perceived B, I must be conscious of the combination of A and B in a single process of thought, as that, to be aware of A and B together, I must be the same self when I perceive A as when I perceive B. Besides, for Kant, the transcendental unity of apperception was an absolutely identical unity which could include no diversity, and therefore we could only be aware of it in opposition to the diversity of perceived data. Self-consciousness and consciousness of objects are strictly correlative and imply each other. This is shown by the very names applied to them, the former being called the analytic and the latter the synthetic unity of apperception. Neither can be strictly called prior to the other, and Kant quite legitimately argues at one time from the consciousness of self to the consciousness of objects, at another from the consciousness of objects to the consciousness of self, thus showing their mutual implication. The two are regarded as developing *pari passu*, so that complete knowledge of self would be impossible without complete knowledge of the objective world. In the empirical sphere explicit consciousness of our representations as ours, so far from being, as subjective idealism holds, the psychological starting-point from which we infer an external world, is both in the individual and in the race a later development, preceded by long reflection on the objects that surround us, although no doubt in a sense this consciousness is implicit in all consciousness of objects.¹ "So the thought that these representations given in perception all belong to *me* just means that I unite them in one self-consciousness, or can at any rate thus unite them ; and although the thought is not yet the consciousness of the synthesis of representations, yet it presupposes the possibility of the latter, *i.e.*, it is only because I am able to comprehend their manifold in one consciousness that I call them all together *my* representations, for otherwise I should have as variegated, multiple a self as I have representations of which I am conscious."

But among objects we should include the empirical self, and not only physical objects. Kant carefully distinguishes the self as revealed by empirical introspection from the transcendental unity of apperception. The former is for him ² strictly analogous to the external world, and, like the latter,

¹B 134.²B 152-159.

phenomenal. For we can only cognise the self by making it, or rather our representations of it, an object to our mind, and this needs a synthesis under the form of inner sense, time, and the various categories, exactly similar to that synthesis which the consciousness of external objects requires, except that the form of outer sense, space, is also required in the latter case. Just as we only know external objects as they appear to us, so we only know ourselves as we appear to ourselves. As the transcendental unity of apperception is only realised in consciousness of objects, so also consciousness of the empirical self implies consciousness of objects. Indeed, it does so in two senses—for, first, we are only conscious of our empirical self, as of anything in the physical world, by making it an object to ourselves; and, secondly, the activities or states of feeling we observe in the self have always reference, whether directly or indirectly, to some external object. Sometimes, of course, the object of a conation (or cognition) or the cause of an affection may be something in the empirical self, as when we seek to overcome a mood of depression or to analyse our feelings for psychological purposes, or feel shame because we judge the motives of an act done by us to have been unworthy, and the conation or affection thus excited may be itself made the object of introspection; but even so we always find that the ultimate stimulus of that in ourselves which has now become an object to ourselves was not anything in the self taken apart from environment but something in the environment working on the psychological disposition of the self.

In this summary I have, in making consciousness of our changing representations the basis from which all else is deduced, adopted a standpoint nearer that of the first than that of the second edition. In the latter Kant concentrates his powers on the relation of consciousness of objects to self-consciousness, *i.e.*, on what is logically the second stage of the deduction, neglecting the transition from consciousness of representations to self-identity and consciousness of objects. The explanation of this neglect may be found in the two probable suppositions—that there was little need of defending self-identity at the time but great need of showing the dependence of self-consciousness on consciousness of objects and the consequent limitations of the former, and, secondly, that Kant with his strong private opinions on the spiritual and primary character of the self was apt to treat self-identity as an axiom. However, even in the second edition deduction, he insists that consciousness of the “pure manifold” of perception, space, and time, and hence all empirical perception,

involves an *a priori* synthesis. The extension of this conclusion to particular empirical perceptions is twice stated in the second edition version. ¹ "The synthetic unity of consciousness is, therefore, an objective condition of all knowledge. It is not merely that I need it in order to cognise an object, but that every perception must stand under it, *in order to become an object for me*, for in no other fashion, nor without this synthesis, would the manifold be united in one consciousness," and again, "Consequently all synthesis, which alone renders perception itself possible, is subject to the categories".

In the first edition Kant starts, not with the transcendental unity of apperception, but with the manifold of representations, in A 99, and it is not till A 104 that he asks what is meant by referring representations to an object, nor till A 107 that he introduces the transcendental unity of apperception at all. Moreover, the detailed proofs of the different categories given in the *Analytic of Principles*, all start from consciousness of change in the manifold of our representations. The conclusion that consciousness of representations, or, in other words, of a changing manifold, is the logical starting-point, is also supported by the fact that it is in the later passages of the first edition (*i.e.*, the passage concerning ² the threefold synthesis and the chapter on schematism ³), not the earlier, that most stress is laid on change or the temporal aspect of experience. These facts, with the passages quoted earlier in the article, when I was trying to show that the argument as given involved the deduction of self-identity from consciousness of representations just because we are always conscious of our representations as related (or put together by the mind in a synthesis prior to consciousness, as Kant chooses to express it), and the impossibility of supposing that Kant failed to realise either the need for such a deduction or the fact that this deduction was implicitly contained in the argument on the relation between consciousness of self and consciousness of objects, seem amply to justify us in regarding consciousness of our changing representations as the logical starting-point of the whole transcendental deduction.

Beginning here we may now tabulate the main points held to be proved by the deduction. In this article we have confined ourselves to a discussion of the first two. (1) Consciousness of our representations, as such, being always consciousness of a diversity in unity, is impossible unless the different elements are both united in a single object of thought and are simultaneously present to a single consciousness; in other

¹ B 138.² A 97-104.³ B 176-187.

words, consciousness of our representations as representations,¹ which is not denied even by the sceptic, involves both consciousness of them as objects and transcendental unity of apperception, or self-identity. (2) We can only regard the self as identical in so far as it holds together different elements in a single act of thought. This identity is a presupposition of all knowledge and not an empirical fact discoverable by introspection. Without it consciousness of objects would be impossible, but at the same time consciousness of it is only possible through consciousness of objects, for the two are only realised in the same synthetic unity of the presented. ² (3) What we experience is always a subject-object complex; neither term can be known out of relation to the other, and consequently either is unknowable if and in so far as it is out of relation to the other. It also follows (4) that knowledge of self is strictly on a par with knowledge of objects, and the one is no more difficult to explain than the other. The doctrine that what we always perceive is only a state of our self is false; on the contrary we never perceive a state of our self except as the state is made an object by a similar process to that implied in cognition of the external world, and, like the latter, involving the categories. If we strictly confine ourselves to immediate experience without introducing anything more permanent, we do not even get solipsism but a relation without terms, an appearance without anything that appears or anyone that it appears to, nothing that can be an object of cognition at all; if we go beyond immediate experience, we have as much right to extend our knowledge on the object as on the subject side. (5) All judgment and the cognition expressed by it involve objectivity. This objectivity in the case of phenomenal events can only be interpreted on the assumption that the order of perceptions is irreversible, which at once involves necessary connexion. (6) The act of judging and the act by which we hold together diverse elements of experience in that unity which makes them an object of thought are identical, or at any rate strictly parallel. From this it should follow that judgment is essentially synthetic, never merely analytic; but Kant left it to others to make this deduction, and only used the parallelism between the two to guarantee the adequacy of his list of categories, as purporting to be deduced from the forms of judgment, not realising that a classification

¹ Or rather as events, since "consciousness of representations as representations" might possibly be taken already to imply consciousness of them as representations to some self, which is of course not the meaning.

² I have omitted detailed discussion of these last five points for considerations of space.

of the latter based on the analytic view of judgment must be affected by a view which (though it still nominally admitted judgment to be analytic) assimilated it to a synthetic process. (7)¹ The categories can only be applied as schematised in time (Kant sometimes says, space also).

These are the main results of the deduction; but unfortunately, as stated, they are marred and partially concealed by an unnecessary and faulty psychological theory. As Kant started with the analytic logic so he started with the atomistic psychology of his predecessors, and while he supplied the corrective to both, he never wholly shook off either. In the case of the atomistic psychology the results were specially harmful both for the form and the understanding of the deduction. Because of this psychology, instead of saying that consciousness of representations implied consciousness of the objective, and hence necessary connexion, he said that consciousness of representations as such could only be explained by a previous synthesis according to *a priori* categories, a defect which was partially but not wholly remedied in the second edition. The reason is that he started with the current view that what we are conscious of first is mere sensations, which we combine into an objective world by some process of inference. He soon came to see that consciousness, in so far as it involves cognition and is not mere animal sensibility, can never have for its object unconnected sensations and that our actual consciousness could not be explained by generation out of such sensations, but he retained in the unconscious the sensations, in their original unrelated form, and the process by which we proceed from sensations to objects, now in the form of a creative synthesis. This, besides encumbering us with a host of mythical entities and faculties, involves Kant in a hopeless contradiction.

For the theory makes the process of synthesis at once an event within and a generative condition of the phenomenal world. In regarding the process of synthesis as a process analogous to conscious cognition, or imaginative construction according to a rule, exercised on the manifold of sensations, Kant makes it an event of the psychical order in the phenomenal world. For he again and again insists that the empirical self with its sensations is as much a phenomenal object as anything in the physical world. But, if so, this process, apart from the fact that it now becomes the study

¹ In B 144 Kant speaks as though this were the most important part of the deduction, but, whatever its importance, the principles we have been discussing are clearly logically prior to it, and it may therefore be omitted without inconsequence in a discussion that does not claim completeness.

of psychology, not of epistemology, cannot be the presupposition and condition of the very possibility of that whole of which it is itself a part. Sensations are facts, among others, in the phenomenal world, and therefore cannot precede the existence of the latter, nor can the phenomenal world be held to have been created by a synthesis of a few of its constituent parts, *i.e.*, sensations. Kant is not able, like the realist, to reply that it is not the objective world but consciousness of the objective world by individuals that is to be explained in this way, for to him the objective, but phenomenal, world, which is the only world we know, cannot be supposed to exist prior to consciousness of it by individuals. A historical account of the genesis of human consciousness from animal sensibility is of course not intrinsically impossible, but such a genesis can never explain experience of the objective world, because it itself is only real as part of the objective world experienced.

If, on the other hand, the synthesis be taken as noumenal, then equal or worse difficulties arise. If it is noumenal, it is on Kant's own principles unknowable. We may deduce a *law* conditioning all experience from considerations of what is involved in the possibility of experience, but we cannot from the same premisses deduce a process prior to experience. For in the first place we could only reach the process by an argument showing that it is needed¹ causally to account for experience; but cause (as opposed to ground) is a category only applicable to phenomena, and cannot therefore be used to prove anything about noumena. Secondly, we can in any case only describe the process in terms of its results for experience. Any further specification by analogy to conscious processes of our mind is illegitimate. It is not a possible object of experience, and the very description of it as a synthesis is unjustifiable, for the process cannot be called a synthesis merely because the experience it gives rise to is complex, but only if we have reason to suppose that the complex experience originated by the putting together of several simpler elements. We have reason to do so as long as we regard the process as one by which, beginning with sensations, we acquire experience of objects, but not when we regard the process as the noumenal condition of all phenomena, including objects and sensations (as *psychical events*) alike. In fact it cannot even be called a process at all, for a process implies temporal change and causal connection, and these cannot be predicated of noumena.

¹ For the process is of the nature of an event hypothetically assumed to account for certain given facts, not a logical ground.

Even if it could be shown that there was such a process, we could only describe it in terms of its results which are elements in experience, and the supposed synthesis dwindles down to the palest of abstractions, akin to the scholastic 'faculties'. The doctrine has only value and meaning in so far as it asserts the results of the synthesis which are discovered by analysis of experience itself. But, if so, why try to go behind experience and not be content with the discovery that all human experience is of a certain form (*a priori* forms of space and time), and that without conforming to certain conditions (the categories) experience in this form is impossible? As an analysis of what is actually involved in all experience in time and space the *Critique* is invaluable, but it does not add to its value but only confuses the issue and obscures its results by the attempt to account for experience psychologically by a synthesis.

The doctrine of the synthesis, then, we have seen, acquires plausibility only because the synthesis is treated both as phenomenal and noumenal, as phenomenal when it is made an object of knowledge, as noumenal when it is made a condition of the existence of the phenomenal world; but if noumenal it cannot be the former, and if phenomenal it cannot be the latter, yet it must be both if the doctrine is to be retained. No doubt if Kant had taken the standpoint of subjective idealism and made the self and its states the one reality and the physical world a mental construction by the self out of its own sensations, then the synthesis could be at once a knowable event and a presupposition of the existence of the physical world, in the only sense in which it could be said to exist; but this certainly cannot be regarded as his view in any part of his "critical" period, for he is quite decisive as to the merely phenomenal character of the empirical self. That he sometimes approaches very close to that view in other respects I do not of course mean to deny, and in so far as he does so he assimilates the synthesis to the cognitive activities of the empirical self and to an event in the phenomenal world; in so far as he approaches the opposite 'phenomenalist' standpoint, the transcendental unity of apperception is viewed not as guaranteeing the existence of a separate unitary self but as a *de facto* unity in experience which may, for all we can prove, be the resultant of a great complexity of grounds, and the synthesis thus tends to become the wholly unknowable process which constitutes such a unity (as in the *Paralogisms*).

Another harmful result of Kant's psychological presuppositions is the distinction between form and content, content

being the material imparted by sensation and regarded as absolute diversity, and form the order contributed by the mind so as to assimilate the presentation to its own absolute unity. It was an unquestioned assumption of Kant, stated at the beginning of the second edition deduction, that all relation is contributed by the understanding. But as all sense-data of which we can be conscious contain a relational factor, and as experience was supposed to have begun from unrelated sensations, Kant concluded that there must have been a synthesis of these sensations, by which synthesis the relational factor was introduced into them. Content is thus conceived not as inseparable, though distinguishable, from form, but as an element which existed before form and to which form was subsequently added. This was one of the reasons for Kant's agnosticism, since, if we change our perceptions in receiving them, he argued, we are not entitled to say that they tell us the truth about what is outside us, for they have by the addition of subjective factors been already transformed beyond recognition.

But the distinction between form and content, when it is made absolute in this way, and content is viewed as actually, not only ideally, separable from form, involves Kant in two insuperable difficulties. In the first place, if all relation is imposed by the mind on an unrelated manifold, there is no way of accounting for the difference between the countless individual relations in the world, or even perhaps between the different categories. This difference can be ascribed neither to the transcendental unity of apperception, for that is the same throughout, nor to a difference in the content related, for in that case the content would be already related implicitly, and so all relation would not come from the mind. To take a physical analogy, the relation imposed by me is the same whether I add water or oil to fire, but the results are different. This difference can then only be accounted for by a difference between the properties of water and those of oil. But the property which differentiates them in regard to the effects of their union with fire can only be described as a relation between water (or oil) and fire, or even if it could be logically deduced from other properties of water (or oil) not explicitly involving a relation to fire, it would only be because those properties contained the same relation implicitly, otherwise there would be no ground in the premisses for the conclusion. Similarly, since the transcendental unity of apperception is always the same, the fact that, *e.g.*, A causes B, while C causes D, can only be explained as due to different properties in A and C, and the relation

of cause to B and D respectively must always be contained, either explicitly or implicitly, in these properties.

The second difficulty is that the manifold, since it can contain no relation before synthesis, must be absolute diversity. But the absolutely unrelated and diverse can have no meaning for us, it cannot be thought or perceived, and no judgment can be made about it. But if so it has for us no real existence. The situation is not remedied by relegating it to the unconscious, for we have seen that nothing in the phenomenal world can be absolutely unrelated, and if it is not in the phenomenal world it is no possible object of knowledge. Similarly, if the whole synthesis is placed outside the phenomenal world altogether and made prior even to the transcendental unity of apperception, then the difficulty is avoided ; but, as we have seen, the process becomes wholly unknowable, so that we cannot call it a synthesis of the manifold of sense or even prove its occurrence. Even mere sensations are not absolutely unrelated, either for consciousness,¹ since they do not exist as sensations for the latter till differentiated out of the complex whole of feeling, and, when we have thus differentiated them, we have already recognised them as elements in objective reality with diverse relations, or as events in the physical world, since as such they are obviously related to the stimulus which caused them and the other parts of the organism. Kant, indeed, rises above this atomistic view when he speaks of that on which the synthesis is exercised as a manifold or as a "Gewühl" of sensations, but this cannot be reconciled with the doctrine that all relation is added by the mind to a pre-existing content. Both difficulties are smoothed over by the introduction of the imagination, for this faculty is used to account both for the individual relations in the world as given in perception and the connected character of sense-data prior to conception ; but no solution can be reached in this way, for the imagination, if its activities are to be known at all, must be regarded as working on a number of unrelated sensations according to these very *a priori* principles which the understanding afterwards recognises as such,² abstracts, and consciously uses, so it only throws the difficulties further back. The one possible solution is to regard form and content as distinguishable but inseparable elements in all human experience, and not divide them by the impassable gulf between absolute unity and absolute diversity, and to make not mere analytic identity

¹ Besides most, if not all, sensations have the characteristic of extensity and so are themselves complex.

² v. B 152, 162 ; A 118, 123.

but unity-in-diversity the type of thought and the ideal of knowledge, so that while on the one side the content ceases to be mere diversity, the mind likewise ceases to be mere unity.

But this faulty psychology must not be allowed to obscure the real value of the deduction, which I hope I have sufficiently emphasised. It is impossible of course to undertake here to defend against all objections what I hold to be the valid results of the deduction as enumerated above; all I can do is to meet one or two such objections; nor of course can I discuss criticisms directed against idealism in general, and consequently against that variety of idealism involved in the transcendental deduction (although many of the conclusions of the latter deduction would be tenable in conjunction with a realist philosophy).

It has been objected that the reasoning of the deduction involves a vicious circle because consciousness of objects is sometimes deduced from transcendental unity of apperception, and sometimes, *vice versa*, the latter is deduced from the former. But, when two facts (A and B) imply each other, it is quite legitimate to argue first from A to B and then from B to A; indeed this is the only way of proving that each implies the other. Of course this does not establish the actuality of either unless one or both have been independently proved, but this is the case with transcendental unity of apperception and consciousness of objects, for both, as we have tried to show, are proved by the deduction to be involved in all cognition. At first sight it might seem as though it were impossible to prove that the manifold, depending as it does on things-in-themselves, must be capable of combination according to the categories; but this presents no real difficulty, for if it were not capable of being so combined, it could not enter into the phenomenal world, it could not be even a chaotic manifold for us. No manifold incapable of such combination could be part of our world, and the fact that knowledge is possible proves that this combination of the manifold is possible. No doubt this argument is in a sense empirical, since it rests on the empirical fact that knowledge is possible; but after all what stronger proof can be given of any principle than to show that unless it is true nothing can be known?

It has also been said that categories, like cause, pre-suppose and cannot constitute objective succession, for any process which appeals to these categories must be guided by experience of what is already known to have objective existence; thus we cannot determine that A is the cause of B without prior empirical knowledge of the objective phenomena occurring

before B, hence our decision that a particular event is objective cannot be due to the discovery that the event in question is necessarily determined. Or, to put it more generally, we are said by Kant to know that a given event is objective when we know that it possesses systematic unity according to the categories; but we cannot know that it possesses systematic unity in general, it is urged, till we know the particular kind of systematic unity it has, which, as Kant admits, is impossible without experience, and experience of it as already objective. To this we may reply that the deduction proves not that in order to view any particular representation as a representation of an object we must establish its conformity to the categories, but that all cognition involves the consciousness, faint or clear, of that which is known as a member of an objective order, and that this objectivity, in its turn, when analysed, implies necessary connexion. We do not know an event to be objective because we know it to possess systematic unity according to the categories, but we know it to possess systematic unity according to the categories because we know it to be objective, and if we do not know it as objective we cannot know it at all. The question as to what is the particular character of the systematic unity it possesses only arises after we have cognised it as objective.

This account does not claim to be in conformity with all passages in the deduction; it seeks to represent rather the logical results of the latter than the precise expression of them at every stage or the fluctuations of opinion traceable in the text. Since the work is not of a unitary character, no interpretation of the line of argument can be reconcilable with all passages, especially if it adds criticism to interpretation and attempts to disengage the material from the immaterial, the tenable from the untenable as given therein. The conclusion we should be inclined to make provisionally is that the main results of the deduction are valid, but that they must be expressed in logical, not psychological, terms, and that the assumption of an actual synthesis by the mind is harmful rather than beneficial to the rest of the argument and itself untenable. Thus the deduction achieved its professed object, the logical justification of the fundamental presuppositions of science, and while doing so it incidentally revolutionised the philosophical problem of the self, undermined the basis of the old analytic logic, founded a new epistemology characterised by a method based on the coherence view of truth, and suggested a new idealism of a far better grounded and more fruitful type than any that had preceded it,—results, any one of which, even taken singly, is obviously of paramount importance for philosophy.